

made at the Liverpool meeting can therefore no longer be urged, and a prodigious benefit has been conferred upon all the departments of knowledge by the steady perseverance of Mr. Gladstone in carrying this great measure against the most formidable resistance both in parliament and beyond its walls. Of that benefit we of the National Association have our full share, along with the gratifying reflection on the part we took in obtaining it. The good thus bestowed seems to be free from all admixture of evil; for the alarm felt by some, affected by more, at the cheap newspaper press, is really groundless. The bulk of readers, always influenced by the more rational and better informed part of the community, will entirely discountenance and prevent those outrages upon the taste as well as truth and decency which we have seen in the press of some countries—of one particularly, so gross as almost to pass belief. But the character of the people must not be judged as if they could approve of such things. We might as well charge the French countrymen of Lavoisier and Lafayette with being robbers and murderers because the daily papers of Marat and Hebert preached wholesale pillage and assassination, as hold the countrymen of Washington and Franklin answerable for the sins of their press—a compound of slander, fraud, and bluster. So the incomparably lighter excesses with which our journals may be chargeable in the heat of factious controversy, are never more than passing and temporary, giving way to the predominant good sense and good taste of the community. The solid benefit obtained by the multiplication of cheap papers, and works of all kinds, is real and permanent, and a subject of just congratulation, if it were for nothing more than their tendency to free the public from the monopoly of the established papers, and the domination which that monopoly has its effect in producing. But our proceedings touching education have been successful in other directions. At the Bradford meeting, the vice-president over this department was Mr. Chadwick, so well known for his invaluable services on the Poor Law Commission, thirty years ago, and without whose aid and agency that great measure of practical social science, the New Poor Law, could never, in all probability, have been prepared. At Bradford he communicated to Mr. Senior, one of the Education Commissioners, who attended our congress, the result of the discussions in the department over which he presided, upon the important subjects of reducing the time consumed in teaching at schools, and of forming those schools and unions so as to lessen the cost and increase the efficiency of instruction. The Commissioner requested him to examine these points in detail when the congress broke up. He did so, and collected a most valuable body of information, by visiting the schools in the manufactories of the West Riding, conferring also with school inspectors and with medical men. His report was, unfortunately, too late to be inserted in that of the commission; but it has since been moved for in the House of Lords, and is presented with his letter to Mr. Senior. It may be considered as an event in the history of education, and it is quite certain to occasion extensive improvements, increasing the number of children taught, lessening their labour, and making it conducive to the health both of the body and mind. I certainly regard Mr. Chadwick as having rendered to education a service equal to that which the amendment of the Poor Law owes him. On the former occasion I gave him what I deemed his due commendation, speaking as a Minister of the Crown, in the assembly over which I presided. I knew him not personally, nor was I aware that he then belonged to the newspaper press. Panegyric is never popular; and mine was not soon forgiven; I don't know if the subject of it was assailed; I well remember the author of it was pretty severely and pretty generally.

"Satire is sure to find a willing ear,
And they who blame the sinner, love the sinner.
But righteous tributes no emotion raise,
And those that love the virtues, hate the praise."

In this congress I hope that my motive may plead in extenuation of the fault, and I may be pardoned for being dull by the consideration that I have been just. A further and an important advantage has been gained by the last congress for the interests of education. The progress of popular instruction had been grievously obstructed by the separate and oftentimes conflicting proceedings of its promoters, attached, and conscientiously attached, to different sects of religion, acting in opposition to each other, though if brought together, and to a clear understanding, they might, from their honest zeal for a common object, have been led to co-operate, or at least not to conflict. This great step was made in the congress at Glasgow. For the first time the leaders of the Established Church party, of the Free Church party, and of the United Presbyterians, met together and maintained their respective views before the members of the association. The result was the formation of a representative committee (of the chief denominations), whose labours there was every reason to expect will lead to a reduction of the points of difference, and a removal of the main obstacles of progress. Both at that meeting and at Bradford the important advantage

was gained of bringing the ecclesiastical school teachers in more full communication with the laity and with the professors of sanitary science. It would be improper to leave the great subject of education in the country where we are now assembled, without mentioning a fact that has been reported to us on good authority, and even under the influences of prejudices which it rather thwarted. In Scotland it is found that the Irishmen educated at the larger national schools are, in consequence of their greater steadiness, sobriety, and general trustworthiness, preferred to ill-educated Scotchmen, for the places of foremen in the manufactories; and our good countrymen of Scotland have a similar complaint of the greater number of Irish educated at the colleges being successful candidates for Indian civil service appointments.

II. THE VIEWS OF GOVERNMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE ROYAL EDUCATION COMMISSION.

Mr. Lowe, the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, in the debate on the vote of £643,794 for Public Education in Great Britain, made the following statement respecting the changes about to be introduced by Government:—"Passing over the economies which we mean to effect, I come to the question—in what manner are we to deal with the defects which have been pointed out by the Commissioners? There are three faults found:—first, that we teach superficially, ambitiously, and imperfectly; secondly, that we do not spread our schools as widely over the country as we should; and, thirdly, that our system is full of complications. It seems to me that it is quite possible to suggest a system which may in a great degree do something towards remedying these defects. What we propose to do will be embodied in a minute which will be laid on the table as soon as possible. I will merely state the outline of the minute, prefacing it with the assurance that the committee need not be afraid that we contemplate any *coup d'état*, because the nature of the grant is such that we cannot make any innovations until the end of the next financial year. It appears to me that the complexity resolves itself into this, that not content with giving the grants on the performance of particular conditions, which I think is a right principle, we have also insisted on paying those grants to the persons for whom they were designed. It might be necessary before the schools were organized to do this. But now we have been in communication with between 6,000 and 7,000 managers of schools, and on no occasion has there been any doubt that money paid for a particular purpose has found its way to its destination. If the payments are made direct to the managers, that will be an enormous advantage, even if the payments remain the same as now. This is a recommendation of the Commissioners, and it is also a recommendation of the Commissioners that these payments shall be discontinued, and that, instead of graduated payments of the complicated nature which I have described, augmentation allowances to teachers, varying from £15 to £30, and augmentation allowances to pupil-teachers, varying from £12 to £30—payments in the nature of capitation grants—shall be substituted. We think it will give great simplicity to the system and much facilitate its working. But then comes the question, on what conditions shall the capitation grants be given? We think that at present the capitation grant is not given on sufficiently stringent conditions. We think we ought to be satisfied not only that the children have attended a proper number of times and that they have been taught by properly qualified teachers, but that something has been done worthy of the attendance and of the teaching powers of the masters. At the same time we must not be understood as proposing to base our payments upon results simply and by themselves. We think it would be rash and imprudent to sweep away a machinery which has been constructed with great labor, care, and dexterity,—which, although it may be complicated and difficult to work, has answered many of the purposes for which it was designed,—in order to substitute the new and untried plan of trusting merely to the results of examinations. What we mean to do is to take care that the capitation grant, when paid, shall be paid only upon our being reasonably satisfied that the desired results have been attained. We propose, therefore, to give the capitation grant on the number of attendances of a child above a certain number, provided always that the school is certified by the inspector to be in a fit state, and provided also that there is a certified master. These are the conditions necessary for the payment of the capitation grant; but, in order to spread the system more widely, we propose to create a fourth kind of certificate, which will be lower than the present certificates, which may be taken by a younger person, and which will probably be more available for the purposes of rural schools. Having thus secured attendances we propose to go a step further. We propose that an inspector shall examine the children in reading, writing, and arithmetic. If a child should pass in the whole the full capitation grant will be given; but if he fail in